ARBOVIRAL INFECTIONS
(arthropod-borne encephalitis, eastern equine encephalomyelitis (EEE), western equine encephalitis (WEE), St. Louis encephalitis, California (LaCrosse) encephalitis)

What are arboviral infections?

Arboviral (short for arthropod-borne) infections are caused by any of a number of viruses transmitted by arthropods such as mosquitoes and ticks. These infections generally occur during warm weather months when mosquitoes are active. The term encephalitis refers to an inflammation of the brain.

Who gets arboviral infections?

Anyone can get an arboviral infection but young children and the elderly appear to be most susceptible.

How are arboviral infections spread?

Most arboviral infections are spread by infected mosquitoes. Fortunately, only a few types of mosquitoes are capable of transmitting the disease and only a small number of the mosquitoes are actually carrying the virus. Occasionally, migrating birds have the ability to carry viruses from one area of the country to another.

What are the symptoms of arboviral infections?

Symptoms of the various types of viral infections transmitted by mosquitoes are usually similar but differ in severity. Most infections do not result in any symptoms. Mild cases may occur with only a slight fever and/or headache. Severe infections are marked by a rapid onset, headache, high fever, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, paralysis or death.

How soon after exposure do symptoms occur?

Symptoms usually occur five to 15 days after exposure to infective mosquitoes.

Does past infection with an arbovirus make a person immune?

Yes, infection with an arbovirus can provide immunity to that specific virus and perhaps to other related viruses.

What is the treatment for an infection due to an arbovirus?

The physician will usually attempt to relieve the symptoms of the illness, but there is no specific treatment available for arbovirus infections.

How can arboviral infections be prevented?

Insect repellents can be used when outdoors in mosquito-infested areas. Homes can be screened to prevent entry of mosquitoes. Communities or municipalities may establish a mosquito surveillance or control program to reduce mosquito populations by applying pesticides and draining swampy areas. Because some of the mosquitoes that carry these viruses are nocturnal feeders, staying indoors from 1/2 hour before sunset and 1/2 hour after sunrise will reduce a person's exposure to biting mosquitoes.

Where can I get more information?

- Your personal doctor
- Your local health department, listed in your telephone directory
- The Utah Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology (801) 538-6191

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